

SCENE RELEASE OF PATIENTS

Revised 2008

I. SCENE RELEASE

Patients may be considered for release at scene only if documentation supports release and all of the following conditions are met.

1. Legal age (18) or married, or legal guardian of minor present (family members other than parents are not legal guardians, unless so appointed). Exception: minors with no care required may be released to their own care or police custody as appropriate.
2. No life or limb threatening condition as judged by EMS personnel.
3. Appears competent to make an informed decision as judged by EMS personnel.
 - a. Minimal guidelines for judging competency:
 - Alert and oriented to person, place, time, situation.
 - Understands the consequences of not receiving care, as explained by EMS personnel (must be "informed")
 - Not suicidal, homicidal, or otherwise mentally impaired
 - Not under the influence of drugs or alcohol to the extent that judgment may be affected as assessed by EMS personnel

II. CONDITIONS OF RELEASE:

1. Refusal of emergency care by patient. Competent, informed patients may refuse care and/or transport after evaluation by EMS personnel. Medical Control must be contacted prior to release. If all the above criteria are met, patient should sign a refusal form (see sample).
2. No care required. Competent patients with no complaint or obvious injury/illness who do not wish emergency care may sign an appropriate release form (not a refusal). EMS personnel must agree that no emergency care is needed. When in doubt, call Medical Control.
3. Care denied by EMS personnel: If a competent patient is judged to have no condition requiring emergency care or transport, services may be denied and the patient instructed to seek care at his/her own discretion.

Such denial of care must be confirmed with medical control. The EMS provider and a third party witness when possible should sign an appropriate statement of denial of care. This option should be used only when conditions are clearly not emergent (i.e., earache, ambulatory ankle sprain).

III. PROVIDING CARE AGAINST PATIENTS WISHES:

When EMS providers and/or Medical Control feel emergency care is indicated, patients may be treated, transported and/or restrained against their wishes when:

1. The patient is a minor without a legal guardian.
2. The adult patient is not competent to refuse care and may be a danger to self or others.

IV. SPECIAL SITUATIONS:

1. Seizures. Patients with a known seizure disorder who have breakthrough seizures despite compliance with medications, and who are fully recovered from a single seizure may be released after confirming with Medical Control.
2. Hypoglycemia. Diabetic patients with hypoglycemia due to lack of sufficient sugar intake (but not insulin or medication overdose) may be released if fully recovered after glucose administration if:
 - a. They understand why they had the insulin reaction and
 - b. They have access to oral glucose or a meal within 20 minutes.
 - c. Confirmed with on-line Medical Control.
3. Heroin Overdose. When a patient with altered mental status and/or respiratory depression has responded to Naloxone administration and is now awake and alert, admits heroine abuse, and denies suicidal intent, he/she may be released at the scene with the agreement of Medical Control. Such patients should be given a referral to Salt Lake County Alcohol and Drug Services (468-2009) for counseling, detoxification and treatment programs. Complete a No-Care-Required release form. Patients who may have used longer-acting narcotics, or who admit or are suspected of suicidal intent should be transported to the appropriate facility as per protocol No. 1.
4. Other situations may arise when scene release may be appropriate. The patients clinical condition, vital signs, mental status, Glasgow Coma Score, understanding of his/her condition and possible consequences, if untreated, **must always be documented**. On-line Medical Control must always be contacted for Refusals and Denial and, when in question, "No Care Required" situations. Proper signatures should be obtained from the patient or legal guardian/parent.